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2/12/76 (MINUTES)
KAGNEW STATION

CB-HK-E1443

SENIOR REVIEW GROUP MEETING

February 12, 1976

Time and Place: 3:35 p.m. - 3:54 p.m., White House Situation Room

Subject: Kagnew Station

Participants:

Chairman: Brent Scowcroft

State: Joseph Sisco
Amb. Edward W. Mulcahy
James Goodby

CIA: Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters
William Christison

DOD: James H. Noyes

NSC
Staff: Col. Clinton Granger
Hal Horan
Michael Hornblow

JCS: William Y. Smith

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Attached to S notes memo from Horan for Scowcroft 10 Feb. 1976

~~TOP SECRET~~ (XGDS)

2

Lt. Gen. Vernon Walters conducted briefing.

Gen. Scowcroft: It seems to me that the first thing we have to decide is do we need Kagnew or do we need a similar facility elsewhere? I gather that the Defense position has changed somewhat since 1971. At that time Defense said they only needed it for two things -- Mystic Star and navigation.

Lt. Gen. Smith: Right now fleet operations are dependent on Kagnew. The Navy has a strong interest in keeping it. They have reaffirmed to me that if they don't have Kagnew they would need a similar site elsewhere.

Gen. Scowcroft: What about Diego Garcia? The Navy has mentioned this possibility in Congressional testimony.

Mr. Sisco: What would it cost to relocate?

Lt. Gen. Smith: The cost would be great. We should hold onto it as long as possible.

Gen. Scowcroft: We have to do this function from somewhere?

Mr. Noyes: Yes. If we didn't have Kagnew there would be communications delays 25% of the time.

Lt. Gen. Smith: Another and more important factor is our involvement in the Middle East.

Gen. Scowcroft: Okay.

Mr. Sisco: In addition there is the present environment with the USSR in Angola and the Somalia situation. Nobody on our side of the fence wants precipitous action. (To Mulcahy) Ed, with regard to the Ethiopians -- who owes who an answer?

Mr. Mulcahy: The Foreign Minister of Ethiopia raised it and gave us till next year to get out.

Gen. Scowcroft: Yes, but we haven't heard anything from him since September. Is he serious?

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~ (XGDS)

3

Lt. Gen. Walters: If the French get out of Afars and Issas there could be a real hassle.

Mr. Christison: The likelihood of violence against Americans will be much higher next year because of the Somali situation.

Lt. Gen. Walters: Look at the bus incident/Djibouti. The French sent food into the bus and put tranquilizers into the food. They then brought in sharpshooters.

Mr. Sisco: It is clear that unless there is a sharp increase of danger to the people there that we need not move. The ball is in their court. Leave it there. We should not take any diplomatic initiatives. If they do come to us again and they are serious, we could put to them the possibility of relocating in Ethiopia. Ed (to Mulcahy), where could we go?

Mr. Mulcahy: Now the real beauty of the location is that it is 8000 feet high. In theory there are other places where you could get equally [REDACTED] For a number of reasons -- morale among them -- the closer to Addis the better. Here is a place on the edge of the escarpment about 170 miles east of Addis. From there you could get [REDACTED].

Mr. Sisco: We have to evaluate future Ethiopian action and reactions. They will continue to agitate for more military assistance and our inability to deliver on this/^{be-}cause of Congress could be a factor.

Lt. Gen. Smith: Another factor is their growing fear of a Somali attack.

Mr. Mulcahy: As long as the Soviets back Somalia the Ethiopians won't want to push us too hard.

Gen. Scowcroft: They can't control the Eritreans.

Mr. Noyes: The telecommunications people like the Addis area.

Gen. Scowcroft: What would the cost of a move be?

Mr. Noyes: Not too bad.

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PA/HO Department of State
E.O. 12958, as amended
May 4, 2006

~~TOP SECRET~~ (XGDS)

4

Lt. Gen. Smith: About \$10 to \$15 million.

Gen. Scowcroft: That's not all that bad.

Mr. Sisco: Let's bide our time. If they want us to move we can enter into bilateral talks at a slow and deliberate pace.

Lt. Gen. Smith: I am surprised and pleased by your position. I had read the State paper and its tone suggested a different conclusion.

Mr. Sisco: Well we are not monolithic at State. What I just said reflects what I think and what HAK thinks. I checked it with him last night.

Gen. Scowcroft: Then we are all in agreement that we should do what we can to stay where we are.

Mr. Sisco: If we ever come to the end of the line we should give some consideration to the idea of a floating communications ship.

Lt. Gen. Smith: Perhaps you are putting things in reverse order. We can study alternate sites in the Persian Gulf NSSM.

Mr. Sisco: Now we are nowhere near that point.

Gen. Scowcroft: The study should look around to where we might go and its cost.

Mr. Sisco: Would this be an inhouse study?

Gen. Scowcroft: We should cast around and see what the problems are.

Lt. Gen. Smith: Some of this has been discussed in the study. Do we need to go further?

Lt. Gen. Walters: [REDACTED] statistics and studies.

Gen. Scowcroft: What about satellites?

~~TOP SECRET~~ (XGDS)

~~TOP SECRET~~ (XGDS)

5

Mr. Noyes: We don't want to be dependent solely on satellites. By 1979 though some of these functions could be done by satellites.

Lt. Gen. Smith: Right now we believe that we can't rely entirely on satellites. However, our position may change over time. The Russians might be able to put our satellites out of commission.

Gen. Scowcroft: So as far as we can see now we will need to remain there permanently and indefinitely.

Mr. Sisco: If there is real pressure from Ethiopia then we can take another look. We should not push this. The pressure should come from Ethiopia and not from us.

Gen. Scowcroft: Let's move forward on the relocation studies. There is no need for site surveys.

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